

tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

25 At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes:

26 Yea, Father, for so it was well pleasing in thy sight.

27 All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him.

28 Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

#### Lesson Links

The connection of this lesson with the last is not very clear. According to Matthew, Jesus from speaking of John the Baptist began to upbraid the Jews with their lack of earnestness, by telling them that they were like children playing in the streets. They had rejected John because he did not mingle in the social joys of men and they rejected Jesus because he did do so. (See Matt. 11: 16 19.

Then he began to upbraid the cities around the lake of Galilee where he had lived and done so many of his wonders, for their unbelief in him. They wondered at his miracles but refused to accept him as their Messiah and Savior.

According to Luke Jesus spoke these words almost a year later after the Seventy came back from their mission among the cities of Galilee. But it matters not when they were spoken. They are words of awful import to us today as well as to those cities.

#### The Lesson Story

For over a year Jesus had spent the most of his time in these cities of Galilee, healing their sick, raising their dead and speaking the most needed truths. These cities had received his blessings, some few of their people had believed on Jesus, but as cities they were turning to their old ways again, even worse, because they had heard Christ tell them their duty and had refused to do it. They had been listening to the greatest man of all ages. But they did not know it. He had been telling them the most needed truths ever spoken; yet, they treated them as idle tales. Men are the same in every age. Today, men pass by the greatest truths. Hence, Jesus began to upbraid them for their unbelief.

#### Chorazin

One of these cities, a near neighbor of Capernaum was Chorazin. In her streets Jesus had preached and healed and yet she as a city had refused to hear him.

#### Bethsaida

Another, was Bethsaida, probably the home of Philip, Andrew and Peter. (Jno. 1: 44.) Jesus had honored it by making three of its citizens his Apostles. He, doubtless, had often preached in it also. But it knew not its opportunity. And Christ's mercy in thus honoring them was now turned

into a woe, because they did not accept him. Mercy rejected brings woe always and everywhere.

#### Rejected Mercies

In effect Jesus said to them: "Woe unto you cities which have been privileged to see and hear the things I have performed and spoken. For you have not appreciated your privileges as such heathen cities as Tyre and Sidon would have done. For if my wonderful works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, they would have repented of their sins long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

But in the judgment, which is coming on the cities of all this land in a few years, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you. And tho it may seem accidental, yet it will be because you have refused to live up to the best you know."

#### Capernaum

"And thou, Capernaum, dost thou think, because thou hast been honored by being chosen as the home of me, the Prophet of Nazareth, that thou shalt be exalted to heaven? Nay, but exaltation comes not because privileges are extended, but because they are accepted. And because thou hast rejected my words thy privileges and the honor I have given thee shall only curse thee. Thou shalt be thrust down to Hades. For, if the opportunities which have been presented to thee had been presented to Sodom she would have accepted them. If the wonders, which I have done in you, had been done in Sodom, she would have been convinced of her sin and of my power to save her and would remain until this day. But even Sodom's doom shall be light compared with yours in the judgment which is coming upon this land."

#### The Coming Judgment

As Jesus spoke these words, doubtless, his mind's eye saw the sweeping hosts of Rome which forty years later came down over Galilee and Judea and leveled the cities, murdered the people, or carried them as slaves to Rome. How terribly true were Jesus' prophecies as shown by the fact that even the sites of these cities are in dispute to-day. And these judgments on these cities were not arbitrary, but of necessity. For the city, nation, man or woman who knows to do better and does it not, by the very law of our natures will become worse and thus invite destruction.

#### The Failure of Jesus

In these cities Jesus had failed to get the people to do right. But it was their fault not his. Seeming failure is not always so. He might have succeeded had he demanded less, but he would have failed to be true to his conscience and his God and that would have been real failure.

#### Christ's Thankfulness

But in the midst of this seeming failure, Jesus was joyful, thus setting us the example, "in everything give thanks." He had suc-

ceeded in a real sense. While the great, the learned and the multitude had refused to obey him, he could thank the Father that he had not "revealed these things to the wise and prudent (in their own eyes) and didst reveal them unto babes," men willing to be taught. He was thankful, (1) because, the wise and conceited would not make good disciples, (2) because, the "babes" would be teachable and ready to do his bidding. The man to-day who is too wise to obey Christ, to suffer for truth is not the man Jesus wants to follow him. We must be absolutely willing to obey Jesus in every particular. O, let us learn to speak the truth and rejoice whether men receive it or reject it. Because it is best for the kingdom whichever way it is.

#### The Authority of Jesus

Christ's rejoicing brought him to the assurance of his own authority from God. Praise makes us confident. "All things are delivered to me by my Father; He sent me with full authority. No one knows the Son except the Father and no one the Father but the Son and those to whom the Son reveals the Father. The Father sent me so that by seeing, hearing, knowing me men might know what the Father is like."

#### Christ's Invitation

Hence, since that is true, Christ can invite the laboring, the heavy laden, the sinful, to come unto him (instead of the Father) and can promise that he will give them rest. We know of no sweeter words in all the world than these. O, men and women, boys and girls laboring under delusions, weary with your own efforts to be righteous, heavy laden with the consciousness of your sins, and sick of the vanity of the world, come to Jesus and take

#### Christ's Yoke

This is a case where you get rest by taking a yoke and putting it on. For Christ always carries the heavy end himself. And more than that his yoke just fits you, hence "is easy." And his burden is so suited to your needs that it "is light." Christ is meek and lowly in heart; he will sympathise with you, and you shall find rest unto your souls. O, the rest that is in Christ. We can work hard under his yoke and bear great burdens for him and yet find rest unspeakable and full of glory. How blessed!

#### Lesson Applied

- 1 Privileges unused turn to condemnation.
- 2 Mercy offered never leaves us the same; we are better or worse.
- 3 The world is organized according to the laws of righteousness. And all disobedience of those laws must suffer punishment.
- 4 Failure is not always such.
- 5 Success, or what seems so may in reality be failure.
- 6 Real failure is to fail to be true to God and duty.
- 7 Real success is to fail in men's eyes, when to do so is to be true to duty.